

MEMORANDUM



Date: February 7, 2005

To: Interested Parties

From: Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director

Subject: 60-Day Public Review and Comment Period on Draft Urban Design and Security Objectives and Policies (Comments should reference NCPC File No. 6567)

On February 4, 2005, the National Capital Planning Commission is commencing a 60-day review and comment period on proposed urban design and security objectives and policies. The proposed objectives and policies will supplement the Commission's *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* and will apply to permanent federal security projects for existing buildings and new construction in the National Capital Region.

Since adoption of the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* (Plan), the Commission has gained considerable experience applying the Plan to site specific projects and has identified several important issues that need to be addressed to maintain the quality of public space in Washington, DC. The Commission's Interagency Security Task Force reconvened in May 2004 to provide direction on several important implementation issues related to mobility, access controls and quality of public and civic space in the nation's capital and the surrounding region.

The proposed objectives and policies address the importance of protecting the design principles inherent in Washington's historic plans; recognize the need to balance protective measures with the vitality of the public realm; and encourage the use of a multi-faceted approach to security that extends beyond physical perimeter security.

The proposed urban design security objectives and policies (Attachment 1) clarify existing Plan provisions and address new issues that have arisen since the Plan's release in October 2002. The policies and guidelines cover issues related to mobility; urban landscape contextual design; barrier placement and design; and vehicular and pedestrian controls. These provisions address important city planning and design issues and will be used by the Commission to review and make decisions on proposed physical building perimeter security projects.

An information session that includes an opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed objectives and policies will be held on February 28, 2005 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the National Capital Planning Commission offices, 401 9th Street, NW, North Lobby, Suite 500, Washington, DC. A brief presentation will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the remainder of time allocated for discussion, questions and comments.

The draft objectives and policies, with corresponding graphic illustrations are posted on NCPC's website under the *What's New* link at <http://www.ncpc.gov/what.html>.

Individuals may provide testimony at the meeting and/or written comments may be submitted before, during or after the meeting. However, to ensure written comments are received in a timely manner we suggest that the comments be e-mailed to info@ncpc.gov or faxed to 202-482-7272. All comments must be received by the end of the comment period, April 8, 2005.

Attachment

**National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan
Proposed Objectives and Policies**

PUBLIC REVIEW, COMMENT AND DISCUSSION DRAFT

Intent and Applicability

These security design objectives and policies provide general guidance to federal agencies on important city planning and design issues that should be considered when choosing protective measures and designing for security in urban areas. The objectives and policies should be used when it is necessary to provide physical perimeter security for sensitive federal buildings and their occupants by lessening the probability of progressive building collapse caused by vehicle attacks.

These objectives and policies strive to balance building security with the functional and visual quality of public space, paying attention to: (1) the city's historic resources and democratically inspired design principles inherent in D.C.'s historic city plan; (2) the city's need for mobility, mixed-use development and activated street level activity to protect and enhance its economic vitality; and (3) the importance of protecting public space from the adverse impacts of perimeter security to ensure that residents, workers and visitors maintain their rights to access, use and enjoy the grace and beauty of the capital's public space.

These policies should guide decisions related to permanent physical perimeter security projects for existing buildings and new construction. Except for section II.C.2, Urban Landscape Contextual Design, these policies also apply to temporary security projects.

These objectives and policies will be used by the National Capital Planning Commission as guidelines when reviewing, as well as making recommendations and decisions on proposed security projects.

I. Objectives

1. To protect the design principles inherent in D.C.'s historic plan and its historic resources and minimize the physical and visual intrusion of security barriers into public space (such as the national capital's vistas, rights-of-way, parks, squares, circles and plazas). These spaces, vistas and environs embody the American ideals of a free and open society.
2. To strike a balance between physical perimeter security for federal buildings and the vitality of the public realm.
3. To acknowledge that acceptance of a reasonable level of risk is inherent in striking an appropriate balance between security provisions and other fiscal, planning, design or operational objectives.

4. To encourage a multi-faceted approach to selection of appropriate security measures that considers intelligence information, operational and procedural measures (such as surveillance and screening) and design strategies (such as structural engineering, window glazing, emergency egress and physical perimeter barriers).
5. To limit the vulnerability of explosives entering or being placed adjacent to sensitive federal buildings.

II. Policies

A. Counter-terrorism Protective Measures

The proposed policies promote risk management strategies that are effective for different threat conditions and minimize the placement and impact of security barriers on public space. The selection of appropriate operational, procedural and physical protective measures should differ for various communities based on development patterns and resources. Urban conditions may require more operational counter-measures and sensitive building design to minimize the impact of physical security barriers in public space.

1. Intelligence information, operational and procedural controls and physical protective measures at building entries and within the building, should be used to protect against person-transported explosive devices and environmental hazards (such as chemical, biological and radiological).
2. Intelligence information, operational controls (such as surveillance, vehicle screening and emergency egress) and physical design measures (such as structural engineering, window glazing and perimeter security barriers) should be used to protect against vehicle-borne explosives.

B. Physical Perimeter Security and Mobility

The proposed physical perimeter security policies strive to balance security with the needs of the city's multi-modal transportation systems that ensures safety and efficient mobility for residents, workers and visitors throughout the national capital region.

1. Permanent or temporary closure of streets or sidewalks within right-of-ways established by the L'Enfant Plan should be prohibited.
2. Temporary closure or access restrictions to streets, parking lanes or sidewalks should be limited only to those uses deemed absolutely critical to national security and essential for immediate continuity of government. These closures or restrictions should only be allowed during times of extraordinary security threats, or brief periods when required for extraordinary events or activities, such as large public demonstrations, the State of the Union Address or ceremonial parades. Temporary closure or access restrictions must be in accordance with previously agreed upon plans and procedures. These plans and procedures should be coordinated among the Department of Homeland Security-National Capital Region, the local emergency management service, local law

enforcement, U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Park Police, U.S. Secret Service, local planning and transportation offices and the National Capital Planning Commission.

3. The National Security Threat Level and the determination of which uses are absolutely critical to national security and essential for immediate continuity of government should be made by the Secretary of Homeland Security.
4. Streets necessary for emergency evacuation should not be closed, blocked or access restricted except for brief periods when required for extraordinary events or activities.

C. Physical Perimeter Security

Intelligence information, operational procedures, building hardening and physical barriers are the risk management measures used to secure buildings from the threat of bomb-laden vehicles. Intelligence information, operational procedures and building hardening are the measures that have little or no physical and visual impact on public space.

When physical perimeter security is necessary, it should be located within and integrated into the design of the building yard, the area located between the face of the building and the inside edge of the public sidewalk. If there is no building yard, as typically found in urban areas, it may be necessary to place physical perimeter security measures within public space in an unobtrusive manner that appropriately integrates the security barriers into an attractive urban landscape.

C.1. Barrier Placement and Design

1. New buildings in urban settings should not be set back from the established urban building line. Habitable building space should be provided along the street frontage to accommodate activated ground floor uses, such as retail or other commercial enterprises. (Figure 6)
2. Protection of exterior air-intake systems should be visually and physically integrated into the architecture of the building or landscape design. Air-intake protective measures should not prevent access to the building yard or public space nor impede pedestrian circulation. (Figure 3)
3. The placement of security barriers in public space is discouraged and should be minimized. Existing streetscape, landscape or building site features should be hardened and used to provide physical perimeter security where feasible. If this not achievable, then the security barriers should be integrated into the urban landscape in a manner that minimizes their visual impact and physical infringement into public space. (Figures 3-5, 7,8)
4. For existing buildings, perimeter security barriers should be located within the building yard when the face of the sensitive building to the outside edge of the building yard is a minimum of 20 feet. If the distance from the face of the building to the outside edge of the building yard is less than 20 feet, then perimeter security barriers may be permitted in public space adjacent to that building. (Figure 8)

5. When physical perimeter security elements are located at the edge of the building yard, designs should accommodate visual and physical public access to the building lawn and entries. (Figure 7)
6. Building physical perimeter security should be designed to improve wayfinding and physical linkages along a street and enhance the pedestrian experience. (Figure 1)
7. The location and arrangement of security barriers should be compatible with the placement of security barriers for other buildings on the street. (Figure 1)
8. Perimeter security barriers crossing the sidewalk should be minimized. (Figures 3 & 4)
9. Placement of security barriers should incorporate the best design practices and be arranged to:
 - a. provide visual clues to signify important circulation routes and site or building features; (Figure 1)
 - b. ensure that the public space is visually and physically accessible; (Figures 4,5 & 7)
 - c. provide safe access to and from transit stops; (Figure 3)
 - d. provide safe pedestrian access to and along sidewalks, public spaces and building entrances; (Figures 3-5 & 7)
 - e. provide safe pedestrian circulation at street intersections, ramps and cross walks; (Figures 3-5)
 - f. provide emergency access to buildings and emergency evacuation from buildings; (Figures 3-5 & 7)
 - g. ensure that maintenance equipment such as snow plows, utility trucks and motorized cleaners can access and maneuver within building yards, sidewalks and plazas; (Figure 5)
 - h. provide at least two feet from the outside edge of the curb to allow for opening car doors, unloading and loading of passengers and ease of access to public space. (Figure 8)

The best design practices should be based on design industry standards, such as those referenced in Time Savers for Landscape Architects or Time Savers for Architects.

10. Security elements located at the curb or edge of the sidewalk should not unduly impede pedestrian access to various sidewalk and street activities, such as vendor stations, demonstration areas or parade viewing along ceremonial streets. The designs must accommodate bleachers, tents and review stands that are used during these significant public events. (Figure 3 & 5)

C.2. Urban Landscape Contextual Design

11. The design of security barriers, including their mass, form and materials should respond to the architectural and landscape context in which they are located and complement and aesthetically enhance the special character of each precinct. (Figure 1)

12. Physical perimeter security barriers within the building yard should be incorporated into the landscape design and include low walls, fences, seating, landscaping and other public amenities typically found within the landscape. The design of these barriers should be architecturally compatible with adjacent buildings and respect the overall character of the streetscape. (Figures 1, 3 & 7)
13. Perimeter security barriers within public space should incorporate decorative tree wells, planters, light poles, signage, benches, fire hydrants, parking meters, trash receptacles and other elements and public amenities typically found in a streetscape. (Figures 1 & 3-5)
14. Street tree planting is encouraged in appropriate areas when the plantings will be in context with the existing or the planned streetscape of the corridor to minimize the visual impact and the physical intrusion of the security barriers in the urban landscape. (Figures 1, 3-5 & 7)
15. Perimeter security design should strive for continuity, consistency and enhancement of the overall streetscape. (Figure 1)
16. When perimeter security barriers must be located in the public realm, continuous rows of the same element should be avoided, the use of bollards should be limited and the security barriers should be arranged using good design principles (such as, hierarchy, rhythm and balance). (Figures 1 and 2)
17. Perimeter security barriers should be designed as a family of beautiful functional streetscape elements that also function as a public amenity. (Figure 4, 5 & 7)
18. Physical perimeter security design for sensitive federal buildings in areas under the jurisdiction of the city or an improvement district should use established streetscape manuals to inform the design of the security barrier.
19. Security barrier design (height, spacing, dimensional volume and structural integrity) should be based on building and site conditions and the relational design speed and angle of approach of a vehicle.
20. Curbs, copings and retaining walls should be incorporated into the design of security barriers to reduce the perceived height of the barrier. (Figure 7)

C.3. Vehicular and Pedestrian Controls

21. Pedestrian screening security operations should not be conducted within the public space. If building additions or renovations are required to accommodate this function, the new construction should be compatible with the existing architecture and should not project into protected public space or view-sheds.
22. Guard booths should be integrated into and designed in context with the site and building design. (Figures 3 & 5)
23. Vehicular controls and check points should be designed to allow off-street queuing space that does not block pedestrian movement along sidewalks. (Figure 2)

24. Vehicular control measures that are visible from public space should be attractively designed and mechanical equipment should be hidden. Hydraulic plate barriers should only be used in locations that are not visible from public space. (Figures 2, 3 & 5)
25. Signage, electronic signals or other control measures should be incorporated into vehicular barriers and guard booths to minimize visual clutter.

C.4. Precinct Context Specific

The National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan is based on a design framework that defines contextual areas and special streets. Special streets, recognized as the monumental avenues and diagonal streets in the L'Enfant Plan are the great linear connectors of the city and provide an important symbolic and ceremonial function in the nation's capital. Ideally, the physical perimeter security for buildings on these monumental and diagonal streets should be designed collectively as a contextually appropriate cohesive streetscape. In the absence of funding to design the entire streetscape, it is incumbent upon the federal agencies to coordinate their design solutions with their neighbors along the street and consider the larger context.

26. Pennsylvania, Constitution, Independence and Maryland Avenues, the capital's monumental avenues should receive special treatment to ensure that security projects are addressed comprehensively, emphasizing the streetscape as a whole with attention to their axiality and formality.
27. Diagonal Avenues should be treated in a manner that emphasizes their landscape features, including significant tree and ground plantings.
28. Special streets (such as Pennsylvania, Constitution, Independence and Maryland Avenues), or those that are included in special planning areas (such as 10th Street SW, 7th Street NW, and F Street NW) should be treated in a manner that reinforces their linkages, unique conditions and individual character.
29. Grid streets should be treated in a manner that builds upon existing streetscape standards and minimizes the contrast between security and streetscape elements.